



# Note - Taking Tips

(Using the “GREAT Notes” Method)

GREAT Notes =

- Get ready
- wRite
- Edit
- Ask questions
- Test yourself

## Get Ready Phase – Set the stage

- Complete homework assignments
- Bring the right materials
- Browse notes prior to class, anticipate a “pop” quiz
- Sit front and center
- Prepare yourself to be focused

## wRite Phase – Note taking

- Include key information  
Ex. main ideas, facts, details, examples & definitions
- Listen for instructor’s cues of importance – ex. repetition
- Use abbreviations and symbols
- Write only on the front side of paper
- Try the Cornell Method, mind maps, or outline formats (see examples)

## Edit Phase – Makes notes useable

- Clean up after class, ex. check spelling
- Fill in the gaps
- Use back side of paper
  - Vocabulary words
  - Make up your own examples
  - Draw charts, pictures, diagrams
  - Add new notes from your textbook
  - Write down questions for your instructor

## Ask Questions Phase – Put yourself in an instructor role

- Design sample test questions
- Changes passive learner to active learner

## Test Yourself Phase – Moves info to long-term memory

- Can only be done after questions are made
- Read the questions and recite your answers aloud



## Miscellaneous Tips:

- Use a three-ring binder
- Use 3 x 5 note cards for flash cards
- Label, number, and date all notes
- Copy down all material from the white/chalk board or overhead
- Leave blank spaces (if you use both sides of your paper)
- Use graphic signals for parts of your notes that you need to focus on (?)
- Use graphic signals for parts of your notes that you totally know (☺)
- Take notes in different colors
- Use highlighting sparingly
- Type up your notes on the computer
- Notice your wandering mind – it’s ok, just refocus
- Participate in class discussions
- Relate the class and your notes to your ultimate goals
- “Be” with the instructor
- Sit in a class room location with minimal distractions
- Compare notes with a classmate
- Experiment with formats – use what works for you
- Use a tape recorder – FYI to your instructor as a courtesy
- **ASK YOUR INSTRUCTOR FOR CLARIFICATION!!**

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## Adjusting to Different Lecture Styles

“**Talking over your head**” – When difficult concepts are not thoroughly explained.

- ◆ **Strategy:** Ask questions (lots if necessary!)

“**Rambling**” – When the presentation consistently goes off track with the topic at hand.

- ◆ **Strategy:** Ask carefully worded questions related to the last main point.

“**Mumbling**” – When the instructor speaks too softly or does not enunciate well.

- ◆ **Strategy:** Sit up front, listen closely, and ask to repeat main points.

“**Tortoise and Hare**” – When the instructor speaks too slowly or too quickly.

- ◆ **Strategy (tortoise):** Ask to repeat or clarify the main points.
- ◆ **Strategy (hare):** Anticipate what is to come, abbreviate, and make connections between concepts. Try not to stress out!

**\*\* Comparing notes with a classmate is a great strategy for all of the above! \*\***



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